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ABSTRACT

This report deals with the structures and functions that must be established to insure comprehensive planning to achieve a total institutional response to the requirements of operating a multi-ethnic campus. These structures and functions include the principles for the planning basis, administrative structure, decisionmaking structure, advisory structure, illustrative functions (those which the institutional structure ought to carry out), and implementation. (MJM)

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University-Wide Planning For The Minority Student

SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD

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Foreword

The student composition of our college and university campuses is becoming increasingly multi-ethnic. Many institutions have designed special programs to increase the enrollments of minority persons. Among public colleges and universities this concern assumes major importance as the states review institutional roles and responsibilities in terms of a unitary system of higher education.

Experience has shown that piece-meal planning is insufficient. In spite of the inauguration of numerous programs to assist minority students, there is evidence that comprehensive planning is essential for successful retention and instruction of many minority students. As a result of several regional conferences on this subject, the consistent recommendation made by the participants has called for the formulation of suggestions concerning ways in which the college or university could organize and administer an institution-wide program responsive to the needs of these students. The suggestions made in this document were derived from the content of the previous conferences and from visits to many campuses. The Southern Regional Education Board expresses its appreciation to the four participants who worked with SREB staff in the formulation of a design for university-wide planning for the minority student.

WINFRED L. GODWIN
President

INTRODUCTION

Since 1969 the Southern Regional Education Board has conducted a series of workshops on adaptation of the campus to the increasing numbers of minority students attending predominantly white colleges and universities in the South. The change in the ethnic character of student bodies is a world-wide phenomenon. In the South it is of particular interest because of the earlier history of "separate but equal" policies which have now been modified in response to the concept of a multi-cultural society.

During these workshops the urgency for institution-wide planning to achieve a multi-ethnic campus became increasingly apparent. Most college and university participants reported that, although many positive steps had been taken in certain aspects of campus life to meet the needs of minority students, there were gaps of such significance that the partial steps which had been taken were nullified in their impact because of areas of college life which had been left untouched. Each workshop group suggested that attention be given to the structure of institution-wide planning models which would provide comprehensive and continuing review of policies and practices which would facilitate the development of an environment in which students of all ethnic backgrounds could find a milieu to which they belonged and in which they could achieve their educational and personal goals for growth.

Experience has shown that the adoption of nondiscriminatory practices alone is inadequate. The goal to be achieved is far greater than an absence of discrimination—it is nothing less than the creation of a campus society in which each person may find an identity in a diversity of cultural and ethnic components. The goal is one which must be understood not only by academic officials and faculty but by non-academic personnel and students as well. Positive results will not be achieved merely by a general posture of good will. Positive results require a technique of comprehensive and continuing institution-wide planning.

The frame of reference for comprehensive planning must be much broader than nondiscrimination. It must be even broader than a commitment to "expand opportunity" to persons of all racial origins. The response should be made in recognition of the nature of contemporary society, which is one of cultural diversity and interdependence, and it should take the form of positive development activity. The student who attends a mono-cultural campus is not being prepared for participation in the contemporary world, either personally or in his preparation for a career.

Organized institution-wide planning at this time has a number of values:

1) it diminishes crisis-orientation;
2) it results in developmental activities rather than reactive responses to specific situations after they have reached a critical point;
3) it results in greater racial understanding among the ethnic groups on the campus;
4) it is a response to an urgent need in the larger society;
5) it gives form and substance to institutional commitments;
6) it has ripple effect, improving conditions for all particularly where the concepts of individual differences and the worth and dignity of each individual are concerned.

In a publication based on the earlier workshops,* the Southern Regional Education Board identified many problems which must be resolved. This report deals with the structures and functions which must be established to insure comprehensive planning to achieve a total institutional response to the requirements of operating a multi-ethnic campus. The description of these procedures does not represent a "model" which may be applied to all institutions. The commuter college and the residential campus face differing problems and requirements. The large university and the smaller liberal arts college will not have the same administrative machinery. But the basic concepts are applicable with local modification, and perhaps it is the small college which faces the greater danger by assuming that no structured planning is necessary.

FIRST PRINCIPLES
or
On What Shall We Base Our Planning and Program?

The suggestions provided in this document are based upon a number of assumptions which are applicable to all types of institutions.

Recommendations must be based upon rational considerations and not on emotional ones.

Minority persons must be involved both in decision making and in advisory activities.

Students and faculty members must be involved as much as is practical both in decision making and in advisory activities.

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*_The College and Cultural Diversity_, The Black Student on Campus, A Project Report: Southern Regional Education Board, 1971.

Commitment to the principles involved in the program must be made by the board of trustees and the president and must be publicized, and the president's involvement must be constant.

The development and implementation of the program must have as its motive the conviction that it is the right thing to do, and is not simply a response to pressure.

The program should be considered as a continuing one, not something started only to be dropped later.

Local situations and conditions must be considered in the development of a structure for planning; there is no universal model.

Priority should be given to efforts to meet institutional commitments.

While one person must be given immediate responsibility for administering and monitoring the program, the choice of that person should be based upon the person's potential effectiveness for achieving the desired results and not merely on administrative title.

Institutions must accept responsibility for expending the funds necessary to produce the changes desired.

Individuals responsible for institution-wide planning in this area need to be highly sensitive, knowledgeable, and capable, and must be influential and respected by all components of the institution.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE
or
How Should We Be Organized?

Effective and continuous planning to develop and maintain a multi-ethnic campus environment requires an administrative structure which is comprehensive, visible, and responsive to campus life. The study group which met in Atlanta suggests the following outline as a basis for discussion with an understanding that adaptations will be made in the light of each institution's general plan for administration. The outline is divided into sections: decision-making structure and advisory structure.

DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE
or
How Should We Be Organized to Make Decisions?

The ultimate authority for policies and major decisions rests in the Governing Board, and it is suggested that the Board establish a committee on planning for a multi-ethnic campus which includes the president.

The president is responsible to the Board for initiating and providing active leadership to administer the institution's obligations to its minority members, and the president will work in close collaboration with the vice president or other administrator who is assigned the immediate authority for administering the program.

The president will assign immediate authority to a high level administrator, who will have access to the president when necessary and supervisory authority over planning groups representing administrative units, faculty, and students.

It is suggested that the vice president, or the administrator assuming this responsibility, have on the staff a planner for equal opportunity programs, an affirmative action officer, and such other resource personnel as may be required for planning and management. (The size of staff will depend upon the size of the institution and the complexity of the programs.)

Division Staff will be designated as required by academic deans, student personnel deans, and others to direct programs.

Minority persons will be included in the composition of the decision-making structure.

ADVISORY STRUCTURE
or
How Should We Be Organized To Render Advice?

The permanent committee of the Board, suggested above, may be advisory as well as directive to the president and the vice president. The Board should avail itself of all the expertise at its disposal to assist in its deliberations.

The president in his or her advisory role will act as the connecting link between the Board and the institutional programs.

The vice president, or the administrative officer assigned the major responsibility for directing the program, is advisory to the president and senior administrators and to the various related committees.

The chief administrator of each major division of the institution, including non-academic as well as academic units, will have a permanent divisional committee to serve in an advisory role. In those divisions which are complex, sub-committees may be established in the sub-units.

In addition to permanent advisory bodies, sub-committees may be established on an *ad hoc* basis to deal with specific problems.

Minority persons will be included throughout the advisory structure.

ILLUSTRATIVE FUNCTIONS
or
What Should We Do?

In this section a number of functions are identified which the institutional structure ought to carry out. The list is not meant to be all-inclusive.

The Board of Trustees will:

formally approve overall institutional policies;

commit the institution to principles of human rights, equal opportunity and racial understanding;

charge the institution's administration with the responsibility to implement the policies.

The president will:

provide general policy statements and assign responsibilities for their implementation;

receive regular reports from the vice president or major administrative officer responsible for the program;

report results to the Board.

The vice president or administrator of the program (with the Advisory Committee and his staff) will:

Examine institutional procedures to determine how they affect minority persons. (e.g., housing, both on and off-campus, student organizations, administration of physical plant, secretarial services, athletics, student-teacher placements, placement office, student development services, recruiting and admissions, financial aid programs, health care, examinations and grading, alumni relations, etc.);

initiate action to modify procedures which appear to be prejudicial, discriminatory, or inconsistent with the concept of a multi-ethnic campus environment;

establish appeal or grievance procedures;

collect data on the participation of minority groups in all segments of the institution's activities and institute through appropriate channels actions needed to rectify inequities;

conduct research, or have it done by the appropriate body, in areas related to the appropriate committees to achieve desired changes. (These studies may include such matters as attitudinal factors, social factors, use of standard tests, and other matters on which data are not available from the customary sources of information on students.);

provide a forum for free and open exchange of ideas;

encourage and work to enhance the communication systems for minority students;

exercise leadership in designing strategies such as intercultural activities, role models, retreats, and training sessions on conflict resolutions, using administrative resources best adapted to these activities;

establish performance objectives and plan for their achievement on a continuing basis. (Examples are objectives for increased minority enrollment, enhanced self-esteem, greater involvement of minority students in governance and other campus activities, increased faculty understanding, reduction of racism, and decrease of proportion of minority students on probation and in population of drop-outs.);

encourage staff development to provide more effective participation in the program through activities such as in-service training, attendance at professional meetings, and graduate study;

see that complaints are processed and arbitrated and serve as ombudsman or appoint a person for this function;

review institutional research activities on human subjects and the treatment of research findings to identify possible bases for increasing racial misunderstandings;

review publications of the institution to assure that they promote a positive image of minority persons;

develop and maintain good relations with the media that will assure publications of facts and will prevent release of misleading news items;

keep a roster of available technical assistance;

through the advisory committee, consider the establishment of procedures to be incorporated in the employing process—for all levels of personnel—whereby the attitudes of prospective employees are explored and recorded with regard to interaction between minority and majority persons. This attitude should be an important criterion for employment;

through the appropriate channels, give attention to community living for black and other minority faculty members and students, both on the campus and in the surrounding community;

provide leadership working with academic deans and department heads, in a review of administrative and teaching activities —including texts, attitudes, and teaching techniques—with a sensitivity to the needs of minority students regarding their own cultural heritage. Reports of these studies should be reviewed by the advisory committee and positive suggestions summarized for the use of the faculties;

with the advisory committee, and working through other administrators and their sub-committees, emphasize the need for greater efforts to involve minority students in campus activities and to be responsive to their concern. (e.g., use of minority speakers and artists, playing of "black rock" or other cultural music at dances, use of minority symbolism in campus decor, etc.);

initiate and emphasize institutional recognition of minority students and faculty through awards for services and achievements.

IMPLEMENTATION
or
How Do We Solve the Problems of Inertia?

Most institutions of higher learning have given attention to problems and procedures related to enrolling increased numbers of minority students. Few have developed a comprehensive mechanism for institution-wide planning on a continuing basis. The establishment of effective administrative procedures will not be easy to achieve. There will be members of the university community who do not recognize the importance of the subject and who are opposed to the changes which may be implied. There will be persons who believe that the situation is taking care of itself and should be left alone. Some administrators may resent the creation of machinery which may interfere in one way or another with the operation of their own units.

On the other hand, experience has shown that most campuses have many persons in the administration, the faculty, and the student body who will respond with enthusiasm to a sincere effort to serve effectively the needs of a highly diverse student body. Their early involvement in the planning process would seem to be a wise procedure.

First, the initiative for change must come from the administration in the form of a firm commitment by the board of trustees, president, and the

central administrative officers. The commitment must be more than support of the idea of enrolling minority students and responding to their needs. It must be a commitment to institutional responsibility for comprehensive planning for this purpose. This stance must be visible to the university community and backed by a willingness to expend some funds for its implementation.

Second, the process of actually structuring an administrative mechanism should involve the thinking of personnel at all levels of the institution's operation. One procedure might be the appointment of a task force to design the structure and define the functions of those individuals and committees which will be established to administer the program. It will be important to define functions in such a manner that the integrity of component administrative units is not threatened while insuring effective means of communication and cooperation.

Third, the person selected to direct the administrative operation must be one acceptable to the university community, must have a commitment to the concept as well as skill in coordinating administrative operational units, and must be able to report directly to the president concerning those matters under his direction. He should be skilled in operating through persuasion and cooperative participation rather than an administrator who operates from a authnoritarian stance. Finally, he must have time in his work load to execute the task and he must have a budget with which to operate.

Fourth, it is suggested that the advisory committee be carefully selected to represent the major units of the institution and that it be composed of persons committed to the basic concept and capable of perceiving how their respective units may contribute to its implementation.

The number of sub-committees required will vary from one institution to another. Some should perhaps be standing committees, others created for a single purpose and then disbanded. The advisory committee's first major responsibility should be to design the sub-committee structure, starting with the minimum number deemed essential and adding others as experience dictates.

Finally, the setting up of channels of communication is of the utmost importance. A key criterion is the rapidity with which problems which arise may be transmitted to those who will have to grapple with them. If the plan is to work, needs must be identified before they become critical problems. Many of the difficulties which have arisen on campuses could have been handled had they been understood early, before feelings became polarized and lines of dissent firmly drawn.

It is clear that there will be difficulties to be encountered in trying to formulate procedures which cut across administrative lines. In one sense, the task of the key administrator and of the advisory committee working with him is to establish a situation through which each component of the institution can learn to apply the basic principles of a multi-ethnic society to its own operation. The time will come when a highly visible planning structure will no longer be needed because the ethos of the campus community will have changed in response to the cultural diversity of its membership. When this moment arrives, the college or university will have become a most valued resource to the total society.

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